

Long Horizon Solutions (5+ years)

The preceding 16 recommendations are ones that the Committee found could be substantially advanced or completed in a relatively short timeline, given the low to medium complexity of the solutions. The following set of solutions, in contrast, are considerably more intricate, partner-involved and require a very large investment of resources and operational commitment.

Chief among them, the Committee found that there is an immense need for year-round emergency shelter. The seasonal Emergency Winter Shelter funded through the Homeless Action Partnership (County and the four cities, including Santa Cruz) is a necessary but insufficient system of shelter. Santa Cruz County has too persistent and substantial a problem of homelessness not to provide for the basic needs of sheltering from the elements and safety in the darkest and coldest hours of the day. The year-round sheltering resources that are available are commendable and extremely impactful for the individuals who are able to access them, but they cannot meet the numbers of individuals in need.

This Committee explored a number of emergency housing models and centered on the San Francisco Navigation Center Model as the ideal. The Committee recommends pursuit of the Navigation Center Model and only if this full-support, low barrier facility becomes unachievable, should a permanent, regional emergency shelter be considered. Failing that, at a minimum, a day center with case management services should be pursued.

Also, as these shelter models are under exploration, the City should continue to partner, and partially fund, the seasonal emergency shelter program. Operating from December 1, 2016 through April 7, 2017 this season, this temporary program provided about 100 bed nights of shelter, plus meals and access to hygiene services, in our wettest and coldest months. While ideally, this seasonal shelter would be supplanted by a permanent supportive shelter, this is an important component of the homeless support system for now.

17. Consider San Francisco Navigation Center Model

San Francisco's Navigation Center is a one-stop facility that integrates rehabilitation, employment, shelter and wrap-around services under one roof. The Navigation Center provides all the key elements of a night shelter, a day center and a homeless resource center. Importantly, the Navigation Center meets clients where they are and welcomes pets, partners and large volumes of possessions, all of which pose typical barriers to entry in other shelter types.

Once at the Center, clients are offered a spectrum of services to address physical and mental health needs, housing support, and basic human services. This fully-integrated model, while complex, appears to be the best emergency or first contact system to support a person out of homelessness. Attached as Appendix G is a detailed summary of the San Francisco Navigation Center operations and outcomes.

In addition to being a full-service integrated center, physical and program design should be carefully crafted to be trauma informed and gender-specific, in alignment with best practices, to provide the best care for this population.

ACTION: Engage in partner and community discussions about a regional Navigation Center. Organize a group visit of stakeholders to the San Francisco Center. Organize or participate in a working group with partner agencies and entities to explore siting, operations and funding.

- **Cost:** Millions. San Francisco’s Navigation Centers cost about \$3 million to construct and operating cost of about \$1 million per center annually.
- **Savings:** Once operational, very large savings to the system of care. Reductions in public safety interventions and safety resource consumption. Reduction in public resources to deal with encampments.
- **Human and Social Impact:** Very high. A low-barrier center than can shelter and directly serve homeless individuals is an ideal model of emergency-into-transitional supportive shelter.
- **All-In Plan Alignment:** Strategic Priority 1: Action Strategies 6 and 10; and, Strategic Priority 3: Action Strategy 2.
- **Partners:** Community, County, other cities.

18. Pursue Permanent, Regional Year-Round Homeless Shelter Center

Should the Navigation Center model not be achievable, the Committee then recommends pursuit of a permanent, regional, year-round homeless shelter. While the Committee feels that some level of case management and service support should be included in any shelter type, there is a need to simply have a greater number of shelter beds available each night of the year in Santa Cruz County. Further, the year-round homeless shelter is recommended to operate with low barriers, allowing pets, partners, families and large possessions. Any permanent shelter should carefully address the considerable challenge of mixed-gender shelters by providing gender-specific spaces and services to

ensure a guarantee of safety and security for all occupants. In addition, design and programming should be trauma informed, in keeping with best practices to serve this population.

ACTION: Engage in partner and community discussions about a regional year-round homeless shelter center.

- **Cost:** Millions, but less than fully-supported Navigation Center model.
- **Savings:** Large savings to the system of care. Reductions in public safety interventions and safety resource consumption. Reduction in public resources to deal with encampments.
- **Human and Social Impact:** Very high. Access to predictable and safe nightly shelter would increase quality of life substantially for those unsheltered in our community.
- **All-In Plan Alignment:** Strategic Priority 1: Action Strategies 6 and 10.
- **Partners:** Community, County, other cities.

19. Explore a Day Center with Basic Services and Case Management

With the closure of the Homeless Service Center’s Day Essential Services Program in 2015, there is no location in the city where homeless individuals can go to obtain daytime shelter, access basic hygiene services such as bathrooms and showers and importantly, stay in connection with a case manager to get on a trajectory for permanent housing. As a result, homeless individuals spend their days on the streets and may not be in regular connection with supportive services that can help them out of homelessness. The Committee recommends that if a Navigation Center cannot be attained and a year-round shelter cannot be attained, that resources shift to providing a Day Center. Even in a more basic Day Center model, care should be taken to support trauma informed and gender specific practices.

ACTION: Explore the re/establishment of a day center with basic services and case management workers to provide a productive environment that helps with immediate and long-term needs. This necessarily would be a partnership with the Homeless Action Partnership (HAP) agencies.

- **Cost**: No current estimate but likely costly in the range of hundreds of thousands to millions.
- **Savings**: Large direct and indirect savings through provision of a location and services for homeless individuals. Savings in waste management, on street contacts through law enforcement and case workers. Tremendous benefit to the community to have numbers of homeless individuals off of the streets.
- **Human and Social Impact**: Very high.
- **All-In Plan Alignment**: Strategic Priority 1: Action Strategies 6 and 10.
- **Partners**: Community, County, other cities.

20. Cultivate Development of Housing

The Committee finds that all housing types are needed in Santa Cruz and adding to supply in general will have a productive impact on housing prices and availability. Given the built-out nature of Santa Cruz and the longstanding community value to maintain the open space greenbelt lands and develop instead within the City, infill development is the pathway available to grow our housing stock.

The City already has aggressive and leading policies supporting the development of small, efficient housing types: Single Room Occupancy Units (SROs), Small Ownership Units (SOUs) and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), our version of Tiny Homes. On the latter, recent changes to state law further reduced development standards and fees. Similarly, the City continually assesses its development regulations and fees to align the regulatory environment with the policies set forth in the General Plan 2030.

The City also has a set of plan updates coming forward to promote housing development. The Downtown Recovery Plan Amendments recommend increased density in the lower downtown, locating housing in the main urban core of the City, with the most access to transit and retail. An inclusionary ordinance and density bonus update will come forward this year. Policy around preserving existing housing from the conversion of long-term rental housing for residents into short-term vacation rentals for visitors is also being developed this year. Finally, the Corridor Rezoning Plan, a long-range (50-year) plan to concentrate density and development along the City's corridors, as opposed to neighborhoods, is under review. These policies and plans will guide the development and preservation of housing.

Through efforts to adopt a regulatory framework that incents development in the right places of the City, to preserving existing housing, to promoting the development of affordable housing, the City needs to actively pursue every avenue to develop housing. There is a deficiency of all housing types and an increase in any sort of supply to the system will alleviate some of the pressures of cost.

The Committee is also interested in emerging housing models. An intriguing recent one is a new program in Portland that is piloting city-funded construction of ADUs in backyards of single-family homes, in exchange for the home owners' agreement to rent the ADU to a homeless person or small homeless family for five years. The tenant will pay rent back to the city and at the end of the five years, the home owner hosting the ADU will have full ownership of the unit and the ability to rent to whomever the home owner chooses. This model requires substantial upfront city resources, however, even considering the much lower cost of construction in Portland (\$75,000 estimated for ADU construction there; basic construction in Santa Cruz starts at about \$150,000). Should more revenue become available to assist with housing, programs such as this would be worthy of additional exploration.

Finally, the *All-In* Plan and Housing First model prioritize the development of permanent supportive housing as the most effective and efficient for the homeless community. The Committee agrees that this subtype of housing is critical for our homeless population, especially given the complexity of their circumstances necessitating wrap-around services to support each individual in the transition to and maintenance of housing.

ACTION: Support the development of housing.

- **Cost:** No current estimate. Changes to regulations and fee structure may result in a loss of revenue to the City. The City has no funding source to develop housing and will have to work with the development community through its processes and requirements to encourage more housing.
- **Savings:** Sufficient permanent housing yields very high savings for the community. Housing is the ultimate solution and can prevent years and decades of homelessness that persistently drain local systems of care and City services.
- **Human and Social Impact:** Very high. Under the Housing First model, having stable housing eliminates the high degree of stress experienced by homeless individuals, allowing each person to be better positioned to address any underlying challenges.

- **All-In Plan Alignment**: Strategic Priority 2: Action Strategies 10, 11 and 12.
- **Partners**: County and City.

Policies or Programs Considered and Not Recommended

The scope of this Committee was sharply focused on the City's visible, unsheltered adult homeless population. Given the acuteness of the need and the interest and compassion from our community, many ideas and possible solutions were put forward by individuals and groups. This Committee carefully collected and considered a wide set of ideas. After testing these ideas with the solutions goals listed at the beginning of this section of the report, the Committee did not add the following ideas as recommended solutions, as they did not substantially advance the goals:

- Declarations of a State of Homelessness Emergency
- Temporary tent encampments on public property
- Temporary villages or RV housing on public property
- Changes to Santa Cruz Municipal Code Chapter 6.36 "Camping"
- Changes to transitional support from governmental institutions (foster care, jail)
- Establishment of a local Homeless Court
- Adoption of service eligibility rules similar to the Santa Monica model
- Contracting with homelessness consultant Dr. Marbut